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S E R M O N

Preached in

St. *Margaret's* Church, *Westminster*,

AT THE
CONSECRATION

OF THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

SAMUEL,
Lord Bishop of CHESTER,

On *EASTER-TUESDAY*,

April 12, 1726.

By LEWIS STEPHENS, M.A.
Archdeacon of *Barnstaple*,^R and Chaplain to His
Grace the Lord Archbishop of YORK.

Published by His Grace's Order.

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SEERMON

Printed in

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AT THE

COSSIFICATION

OF THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD

SAMUEL

Lord of CHESTER



OF THE FUTURE

April, 1786.

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Archdeacon of the Diocese of Chester, and Chaplain to His

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I TIM. V. 17.

*Let the Elders that rule well, be counted
worthy of double Honour; especially they
who labour in the Word and Doctrine.*



THE Greek Word which signifies Elders may be likewise rendered Presbyters; and the Order of Presbyter being always antecedent to that of Bishop; and, as the Lesser, contained in it, and predicated of it; and the Name itself implying Age, and from thence sometimes denoting likewise Dignity of Office; it has been often used promiscuously for Bishop itself: which has produced great Disputes, whether the Church was antiently governed by Bishops or Presbyters.

But that there was not only a Difference of *Honour*, but of *Power* likewise; and that *Bishops* were not merely as *Presidents* of Assemblies, but acted

likewise as *Rulers* of the Clergy ; and could not only receive an Accusation, but *punish* the Crime ; and were invested with a *separate Authority* over the inferior Orders of the Church ; and had their *particular Offices* in it of a *higher Nature* ; and were a *distinct Order* of the Church ; and that the *Church* was governed by them, and always had *three distinct Orders* in it ; has been often maintained and defended by all the great Champions for Episcopacy. Therefore I shall not enter into the Field of Controversy, but consider the Text in that View, which *St. Paul* himself proposes to us in these Epistles : From the Tenor of which we may observe, that he endeavours only to point out to us the several Duties belonging to the Clergy, and give us Rules how we should discharge the Holy Function, and what Sort of Behaviour and Manner of Life is suitable to every Station of it, from the lowest *Office of a Deacon* to the *Good Work of a Bishop*. And as these Epistles were addressed to *Timothy*, who was a Bishop in the Church of *Ephesus* ; so we may observe, that *St. Paul* recommends his Advice to him, under the *Character* of a *Good Bishop* : that he might form himself upon that Model, and learn the Work of a good Bishop from the very Description of it.

And we cannot but take Notice, that *St. Paul* fills up the Character of a Bishop, with several kinds of Engaging Virtues, which are chiefly adapted to encourage Mankind to a Nearer Approach and a Greater Familiarity

Familiarity with their Spiritual Governours. And therefore He affirms, that a Bishop must be *Sober, of Good Behaviour, given to Hospitality, Patient, Meek.* These are Virtues of the *Social* kind, which must give him a Better Reception among Men, and make his *Jurisdiction* less Terrible, and *his Word* and *Doctrine* more Prevailing.

This leads me to observe to you the two Great Branches of the Episcopal Office, which shews itself in *Ruling well*, and *Labouring* constantly *in the Word and Doctrine.* For which Reason St. Paul tells us in another place, that a Bishop should be *Apt to Teach, and Rule well his own House, having his Children in Subjection, with all Gravity.* The First of which two Qualifications supposes him skilful in all Wisdom, and versed in Knowledge and Godly Science, for the *teaching* of others: and the latter, from the previous Government of His House, presumes him fitted, in some measure, for Ecclesiastical *Authority*; and, by the Allusion, seems to tell him, that it shou'd certainly resemble That in a Family, which governs Sons, and is always softened with a Fatherly Affection. Wherefore from the Wise and Judicious Exercise of These two distinct Branches of the Episcopal Function, I shall endeavour to shew that Bishops ought *to be counted Worthy of Double Honour.*

First, With Regard to their Jurisdiction, as they that Rule well.

Secondly,

Secondly, With Respect to Their instructing Others ; as They that labour in the Word and Doctrine.

First, I shall shew why Bishops ought to be Honoured, with Regard to their Jurisdiction.

Every Sort of Lawful Power and Jurisdiction was certainly designed for Good Government. And if we consider Good Government in a General View, we shall find it of great Benefit and Advantage to All Mankind : It is This that *removeth Violence and Spoil, and taketh away Exactions from the People* : It is This that maketh our Blessings our Own, and secures to us our Field and our Vineyard. For, however Great our private Fortunes may be, yet they frequently take their Happiness or Misery from the Government itself, under which we live : And the Influence of it extends to All the Subjects of the Land ; It is as a *Tree, which spreadeth out its Branches to all the Corners of the Earth ; and the Beasts of the Field have a Shadow under it.*

And as Men have received a Shelter and Protection from Good Government ; so they have generally made their Acknowledgments of it in the Grateful Returns of Duty and Honour. Therefore when *Job went out to the Gate through the City, and pre-*

prepared his Judgment Seat in the Street ; the Young Men saw him, and hid themselves ; the Aged arose, and stood up ; the Princes refrained talking ; and the Nobles held their Tongue. From which Passage we may plainly learn, That the Young and the Aged, the Princes and the Nobles, gave Honour and Reverence to the Person of the Ruler, especially One *that was clothed with Righteousness, and whose Judgment was as a Robe and a Diadem.*

And This Honour seems due to every Good Ruler in general, because it is a Testimony of his Wisdom and Goodness in Ruling well, and sometimes the Only Return we can make him. And when it flows from the Hearts of a People Truly sensible of their own Happiness, it quickens the Designs of a Good Ruler, and gives Joy and Comfort to all his Labours. And as it is a Reward to the Ruler, so it likewise tends to the further Benefit of Those that are ruled ; because the Passions of a Generous Mind are easily provoked by the Praises of others, to a quick Imitation of the like Virtues ; and we may observe, that it operates strongly on the Wills and Affections of Young People ; who are presently warmed with any visible Marks of Honour.

Since Government therefore is so Beneficial, that there is a General Honour due to Every wise and prudent Manager of it : I shall speak particularly
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with relation to those that *Govern the Church* ; and shew what Honour is due to Them from the prudent Exercise of their Jurisdiction, which gives Them the Opportunity of Ruling well.

I shall not presume in this Place to ascertain the Bounds of Ecclesiastical Power. The Necessity of Laws suitable to Every Sort of Government, the Authority given by Scripture, the Example of the Apostles in exercising Their Power, the Commission to *Titus* for setting in Order the Things in *Crete*, the Canons made by General Councils, the *Receiwing* of Them into the Practice of our *Common Law*, and the allowing of them by the Famous Statute of *Henry VIII.* till they are review'd, and likewise the Canons and Constitutions made and confirmed in our Own Synods, are sufficient Grounds for Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, and perfectly warrant the Authority of it. Therefore I shall only consider the Right Use and Application of This Power ; and shew what Honour is due to the Ruler, for exerting it in such a Judicious Way, as shall answer the Great End and Purpose for which it was designed.

This Jurisdiction may be divided into a *Coercive* Power, and an *Ordering* Power ; each of which is attributed to Bishops by *St. Paul* ; who authorizes *Timothy* to take an *Accusation* against an *Elder*, before *Two or Three Witnesses* ; and likewise leaves
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Titus in Crete, to set in Order the things that were wanting, and Ordain Elders in every City.

Wherefore I shall first speak of the Honour which arises from a prudent Administration of the Coercive Power.

Whatever Honour is due to the Civil Magistrate for punishing Vice and restraining Sin ; is likewise due, in its Proportion, to the Church Ruler ; who not only punishes Sin, but endeavours to prevent the spreading of it, by cutting off a Familiarity with the Sinner. *I have written unto you, says St. Paul to the Corinthians, not to keep Company, if any Man that is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner ; with such a one, No Not to Eat.*

This is esteemed not so much a Cautionary Advice, as an Ecclesiastical Punishment : And we may observe, that it reaches some of the Sins of the Mind, which are not punishable by *any Human Law, or Magistrate*. And whereas those that are under the general kinds of Civil Punishments, may freely converse with Friend or Brother ; and are not, by Law, restrained from others, as *evil Doers* ; the Ecclesiastical Censure tells us, *with such not to keep Company* ; and likewise restrains us from eating our Bread with the *Railer* or the *Drunkard* ; lest any Sort of Familiarity with them should communicate the like Vice,

and corrupt the Good Manners of Others. And we may further see how the good Ruler endeavours to work the intended Reformation, by discountenancing the Sinner, and forbidding any Conversation with him, and leaving him alone in a melancholy Shame: which Punishment, to a Generous Mind, is more afflicting than the Magistrate's Rod, which is always *ready for the Back of Fools.*

We cannot deny, but that the Punishment of Excommunication is very Terrible, as cutting off a Member from the Body of *Christ*. But a good Ruler will lay it up as a Weapon of War, which should only be drawn on some great Occasion. For, whenever any other Punishment is provided by the Laws, or kinder Methods can be used; the Church Governor will decline applying the Severity of Excommunication to lesser Faults; nor will he go on to weaken its Authority, by the frequent Use and Exercise of it; but as it is a *Spiritual Punishment*, he will chiefly apply it to such Crimes, as are *merely Spiritual*; not without an Uneasiness to himself, for the Necessity of enforcing it; not without some *previous Endeavours* used by him, for reclaiming the Sinner; and not without a Charitable Design of keeping others from the like Sin: therefore he will not *reject a Heretick, till after the first and second Admonition*; nor will he deliver Hymenæus and Alexander unto Satan, unless it be, that they, and others, may learn from thence not to blaspheme.

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The due Support of this Authority does likewise require a greater Degree of Sanctity and Virtue in the Person that administers it; for, Ecclesiastical Governors are scarcely allowed the natural Passions, and Common Failures of Other Men. Any Blemish in their Lives, any little Spot in their Characters, is presently charged upon the Office itself, and always applied for lessening the Power and Authority of it. Wherefore, the vigorous Exercise of Authority by any Ruler, implies a Consciousness of his own Uprightness, and certainly bespeaks an Innocent Heart, which neither fears Reproach, nor Envy. This leads me to consider the several Qualifications which are necessary for a Church-Ruler, and which are always attended with Honour.

First, It is necessary that the Rulers of the Church should have a thorough Knowledge of the Ecclesiastical Laws.

The Knowledge of the Laws is so requisite in Civil Affairs, *that the Kings of Israel, when they sat on their Thrones, were commanded to have a Copy of the Law in a Book before them, that they might not turn aside from the Commandment, to the right Hand, nor to the left.* And the Reason of this Command holds good in Ecclesiastical Government; which has its Scripture, its Rules of Law, its Canons and Decrees, to direct the Course and Progress of it.

This will keep the Ruler himself from *turning aside to the right Hand, or to the left* ; and will be likewise a Great Benefit to all Those that are governed by him ; For, whenever the Law is the Rule of Government, the Duty required is certainly known, the Rule and Measure of acting is fixed, and the Ruler himself does nothing more than give a Life and Vigour to it.

And we may from hence infer, that Those are Good Governors of the Church, who are well skilled in all the Laws and Canons of it, and are themselves directed by them.

Secondly, It is necessary for ruling well, that we rule with great Steadiness and Courage. An *unsteady* Ruler always lessens his own Authority ; and a *fearful* Ruler can seldom be honest. For, such will *honour the Face of the Mighty*, and yield to the Pressing Importunities of the Great ; by which Means he will *slacken the Law*, and loosen the Bands and Cords of Discipline : But a Good Ruler is as Bold as a Lion, *which turneth not out of the Path for any*. Wherefore a fix'd and steady Resolution of keeping to the Law, and enforcing a constant and uniform Obedience to it, is necessary in every Sort of Rulers ; for, it had been of little Advantage to the State, that the Laws of the *Medes and Persians* were unalterable ; unless the Rulers, that put them in

in Practice, had shewed themselves unalterable too.

It is another Qualification of a Good Ruler, that he shou'd govern the People without Favour, without Partiality ; he must neither respect the Poor nor the Rich, the Friend nor the Enemy ; for the Law itself knows no private Distinction, no private Passion, no private Interest ; it has neither Father, nor Mother, nor Friend, nor Brother : He therefore that would Rule Well, should not be *partial in the Law*, but act with a free unbiaſſed Mind, and seem to forget *his Own People and his Father's House*. This will make his Authority Great, and Decisions Weighty. For, although we may innocently distinguish our Friends by our private Favours ; yet we must remember, that there is a Justice always due to our greatest Enemies.

Moderation likewise is another Qualification always Necessary for Ruling well ; not That which seeks an Applause by remitting the Common Discipline of the Church ; but a certain Freedom from Pride and Anger, which are very Unbecoming the Majesty of a Ruler, and always Enemies to Wisdom and Discretion : Therefore a Bishop, according to St. Paul, should be *Meek and Patient*, and always shew a *Good Behaviour*, and treat his Inferiors with so much Civility, as to let them know, that they are *under the Law*, but *still as Free*. Besides, he should
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never abuse his Power by making it the *Instrument of Wrath* and Persecution ; nor should he *rule the Flock with Cruelty*, but rather with the *Spirit of Power and Love*. For God ordained him for a gentle Sway, and it seems implied in the milder Names of *Father* and *Shepherd*.

Under this particular Qualification of a good Governor, I cannot but take Notice of the Abuse of Power in the Popish Inquisition ; which the good Rulers of the Church of *England* will always detest, as wholly inconsistent with the Meekness and Tenderness of the Christian Religion ; which speaks Joy, and Peace, and Comfort to all Men ; and constantly endeavours to reclaim the Sinner by the milder Calls of Mercy and Repentance. And we may observe, that the Kind and Merciful Author of it, did not *call for Fire from Heaven*, but gently reprov'd the Furious Spirit and Mistaken Zeal of the two Apostles ; and in the Course of his Ministry destroyed nothing, but the *barren Fig-Tree*. From this Example we may certainly learn, that Kindness and Tenderness are the surest Methods of gaining the Profelyte, and convincing the Heretic, who will not be burnt into a Belief ; but may perhaps be instructed with Meekness, and yield to the kind and gentle Light of *the Sun of Righteousness*, when he arises with nothing but *Healing in his Wings*.

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This Moderation towards those that dissent from us, is at this Time the distinguishing Honour of our Church ; which uses no other Force, but that of Persuasion ; and chooseth rather to *build up*, than to *destroy*. And if some Offenders are so unfortunate as to fall under the Censures of it ; yet the Rulers seem to bear a Part in their very Grief, and, after the proper Marks of Repentance, are always ready to *restore them again in the Spirit of Meekness*, and enjoy a Pleasure in reconciling the Penitents to the good Opinion and Love of their Brethren ; and seem to imitate the Example of *St. Paul*, whose kind Behaviour towards the *Corinthians*, is a fine Instance of this great Tenderness and Moderation in a Church Ruler : *I determined this with myself*, says this kind Apostle, *that I would not come again to you in Heaviness ; for if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me ? and I wrote this same unto you, lest when I came, I should have Sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice ; having Confidence in you all, that my Joy is the Joy of you all. For, out of much Affliction and Anguish of Heart, I wrote unto you with many Tears ; not that you should be grieved, but that ye might know the Love which I have more abundantly unto you. But if any have caused Grief, he hath not grieved me, but in Part ; That I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a Man is this Punishment, which was inflicted of many : so that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should*
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be swallowed up with over-much Sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you, that you would confirm your Love towards him : For to whom ye forgive any Thing, I forgive also.

Having thus considered the *Coercive* Power, and shewed the Qualities requisite for it ; I shall briefly consider the *Power of Ordering*, and shew wherein a Good Ruler ought to be Loved and Honoured for it.

The Care of Ordering fit and proper Persons for the Ministry, is wholly entrusted to the Wisdom of the Bishops ; and the True and Faithful Discharge of it deserves the greatest Honour and Applause. Nothing but this Care and Circumspection in the first Admission, can restore the Priesthood to its former Dignity. For, whatever we may think of the sullen Dissenter, or the busy Mockers ; yet there is No Enemy of the Church so hurtful, as a Wicked Minister ; nor any Jest so Severe, as the Weak Arguments of a Foolish one. And therefore, we shou'd honour the Rulers of the Church for admitting the Good, the Virtuous, and the Learned ; and we shou'd pay them likewise the same Honour for rejecting the Imprudent, the Immoral, and the Ignorant ; and for *laying Hands suddenly on no Man.*

And this Strictness does not terminate in the Bare Choice of proper Persons to be sent into the Vineyard,

yard, but is carried on to a future Inspection over their Morals, and a further Knowledge of their *Manner of Life*, their *Purpose* and their *Faith*; for, *the good Shepherd knoweth his Sheep*; and, indeed, he maketh it his Constant Care, that the Clergy serve with great Diligence in their Appointed Courses, and are Sober and Vigilant, and of Good Behaviour.

This is a general Benefit to a Nation; and the Credit of a Learned and Regular *Clergy* will Naturally ascend to the Bishop himself, who will be Lovely in the Beauty of his Flock, and always honoured in their Honour. For we may suppose, that *Titus* was *highly esteemed in Crete*, not only for *setting in order the Things that were wanting*, but likewise for *ordaining Good Elders in every City*.

The setting in order the Things that are wanting, is Another Part of the Ordering Power; and is always made an Article of Enquiry at the Bishop's Visitation. And if *David*, who was a mighty King in *Israel*, thought it no Diminution of His Majesty, to take care of the *Service* of the Tabernacle, and order those that shou'd *prophecy with Harps, and give Thanks to the Lord with Psalteries and with Cymbals*; Surely, those Rulers of the Church deserve a Great Degree of Honour, who take care of the *Houses of God*, and the *Decency of His Service*; and make it one of their Nearest Concerns,

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that

that there may be *Honour and Worship before Him, and Strength and Beauty in all His Sanctuaries.*

It is This, that makes the Worship itself *more Solemn*, and always raises, in Pious Minds, a secret Honour for Those that take care, that it shall be performed *in the Beauty of Holiness*. For when we see a large Diocese well regulated, and become, as it were, one Great and Uniform Family, where every Person acts in his Station with *Decency and Order*, and every House of God is Beautiful; we naturally reverence the Good Ruler, who forms and directs the whole Scheme, and in every Part sees that it is Good, and bestows a Fatherly Blessing upon It.

Having thus shewed what Honour is due to Ecclesiastical Governours for Ruling well, I shall proceed to the Second Part of my Discourse, and briefly shew, that they ought to be honoured for Instructing others, as those that *labour in the Word and Doctrine*.

St. *Paul* seems to lay a particular Force and Weight on the Word *Labour*; as if the Honour which was paid to the Elder, was not only a Reward of past Labours, but likewise an Engagement to a future Activity, and required a Diligence suitable to the Greatness of the Honour conferred. For,
there

there can be no True Honour without a Proportionate Degree of Labour ; for, whenever a Man ceases from his Labour, thro' any Slothfulness or Indolence of Temper, and gives himself up to Slumberings on the Couch ; the Honour which is paid him is nothing more than that False Worship which is paid to an Idol ; which bears, indeed, the Resemblance of a Man, but without Life, without Speech, without Motion : and therefore the Language of the Prophet *Zechary* is very *Expressive*, when he reproves the Negligent Priest under the Name of the *Idol Shepherd*, and denounces a terrible Punishment against him. *Wo!* says he, *to the Idol Shepherd that leaveth his Flock ; the Sword shall be upon his Arm, and upon his Right Eye: His Arm shall be clean dried up, and his Right Eye shall be utterly darkened.*

And if a slothful Inactivity in a Preacher of the Word, shall be thus punished with a *Withered Arm* and a *darkened Eye* ; surely the Labours of a diligent Shepherd will be attended with some Sort of Honour, which will be as visible as the Punishment of the Idle ones : For, a certain Joy and Gladness of Heart, arising from a Faithful Discharge of his Duty, will constantly shine with Brightness in his Eye ; and his Hand will be like the *Diligent Man's*, which beareth Rule.

Since therefore, those that are in the Highest Stations of the Church are obliged to some Labour; *St. Paul* seems to point out to us *What it shou'd be*, by attributing Honour to those that *labour in the Word and Doctrine*: And he seems likewise, in the Words of the Text, to give a certain Preference to It, as that which wou'd form Right Minds in all the People, and make the Bishop's Jurisdiction itself more Prevailing, or less Needful.

By thus labouring in the Word and Doctrine, *St. Paul* means, that they should not only inculcate the Moral Duties of Life; but likewise Explain the Particular Doctrines of the Christian Faith, and defend the great Mysteries of Godliness. Therefore, among other Doctrines which *Timothy* was ordered to *command and teach*, are contained these great Points; *That God was manifest in the Flesh; justified in the Spirit; seen of Angels; preached unto the Gentiles; believed on in the World; received up into Glory*. This is the Form of Sound Doctrine; These are the great Truths of the Gospel; and when they are delivered by the Holy and Reverend *Fathers of the Church*, with *Uncorruptness*, and *Soundness of Speech*; and with an awful Gravity, and Plainness of Behaviour; and as of *Sincerity*, and as of *God*; they will make a deep Impression on the Hearers, and create a Reverence for the Preachers Themselves, because they speak as the *Oracles of God*.

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And this Labour in its Proper Season, is more particularly required from the Governors of the Church, because it receives a great Assistance from their very Characters: The Greatness of their Office creates an Attention in the Meanest Hearer; the Sanctity of their Persons, gives a Weight and Authority to all their Doctrines; and they appear to their Hearers under the Advantages of greater Wisdom, longer Experience, and greater Learning; and therefore such will be honoured by the People, and always *held in great Reputation*; especially if they teach with *Meekness*, and don't presume to have a *Dominion over Their Faith*, but rather instruct Them as *Helpers of Their Joy*.

But granting that they do not All *Speak with the Tongue of Angels*, nor always preach in the *Power of Demonstration*; yet if they labour constantly and Prudently in private *Reproofs, Exhortations, and Admonitions*; even That will have its due *Advantages*, and be rewarded with its proper *Honours*: Therefore says St. Paul, *We beseech you, Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in Love, for their Works sake.*

And, if labouring in the Word is highly esteemed, when it only intends a *Private Advantage*, and reforms an *Error*, or conveys *Comfort* to a *Troubled Spirit*;

Spirit; How much more ought it to be revered, when it aims at the Publick Good of a Nation, and instructs the Hearers in Lessons of Loyalty, and forms the People to a willing Obedience, and improves the Desires of a Loyal Heart, and strengthens the Ties and Bands of Government. And here I may observe, that if it be an Honour to a Civil Magistrate to procure a ready Obedience to his Laws; that Obedience perhaps received a Greater Willingness from those Dispositions, which were first instilled by the Tongue of the Preacher: For the People are ready to receive their Law from his Lips, and it has a powerful Influence on their Minds, altho' it be but a Line or a Precept, a Little here and a Little there.

This is such a sensible Benefit, that Kings have appointed great Dignities and Distinctions of Honour for such as have laboured *in the Word and Doctrine*; and whilst they go on to support their Labours with a Steady, Loyal, Upright Heart; they will be honoured by the Prince and the People, and *esteemed in Love for their Works sake*. And let us, like Dutiful Sons of the Church, acknowledge their Labours, and pay them those particular Honours, which are due to every Branch of their *Power*; let us hear them, and reverence them, as our Teachers in the Lord; let us cheerfully obey them, as our Spiritual Governours; let us *love* them, and honour them, as our Spiritual Fathers; and let us endeavour to
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make their Names as sweet and delightful as the *precious Ointment*; and when they are exercising their Holy Office, let us think them then as Great and as Lovely, as *Simon the High Priest, the Son of Onias; who was honoured in the midst of the People, at His coming out of the Sanctuary; and was as a Morning Star in the midst of a Cloud; and as the Moon at Full; and as the Sun shining upon the Temple of the Most High: for when he put on the Robe of Honour, he was cloathed with the Perfection of Glory; and when he went up to the Holy Altar, he made the Garment of Holiness Honourable.*



F I N I S.



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 to make the Sacrifice of the Holy Spirit.

T I N T S